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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#) [PK](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA SUPPORTS CLUSTER MUNITIONS DISCUSSION IN
CONVENTION ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS BUT STILL UNDECIDED ON
NEGOTIATING MANDATE

REF: STATE 73160

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs
Alice G. Wells. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

11. (C) Andrey Malov, Counselor in the Multilateral Disarmament Section of the Foreign Ministry's Department for Disarmament and Security Affairs, told us June 5 that Russia shared the US view that discussion of cluster munitions (CM) should remain in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). He described the Oslo process as "counterproductive," which could undermine our joint efforts in the CCW. Malov added that Russia believed there was no justification to term CM as "illegitimate" weapons but acknowledged that how such weapons were used merited further discussion.

12. (C) According to Malov, Russia's view differed from that of the US in only one respect -- Moscow thought it would not be useful to condemn the Oslo process publicly. Russia's approach was to work within the CCW to build consensus on the efficacy of CM, relying on expert military opinion to do so, but ultimately leaving it to states parties to determine on an individual basis whether to use or ban CM by their own forces.

13. (C) Although Moscow preferred to keep discussion of CM within the CCW, Malov said the GOR had not yet decided its position on the negotiating mandate. Much would depend on the outcome of the Government Experts meeting later this month, especially whether a basis for negotiations emerged. He pointed out, for example, that a common definition of CM did not exist. There must be a reasonable understanding of the issues on which to structure negotiations, he added. In this respect, Malov asked about the status of a promised US food-for-thought paper, which he said would help determine Russia's approach to negotiations for the November meeting of states parties. Looking ahead, Malov stressed that Russia would not be able to accept legally binding restrictions on the use of CM, including constraints on technical characteristics of individual weapons or targeting limitations, but could consider adoption of measures to minimize CM's potential impact upon innocent civilians.

14. (SBU) Malov welcomed the opportunity to meet bilaterally with US counterparts prior to or on the margins of the Government Experts meeting, as well as multilaterally, if necessary, with other major CM users.

RUSSELL